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ABSTRACT

Discussed are theoretical and empirical points regarding parental roles in Yugoslavia, with a view toward practical implications for all society. Content focuses on (1) the importance of the change of maternal and paternal roles from the complementary, traditional type of relationship to a reciprocity of parental activities in childrearing; and (2) how the traditional type of motherhood and fatherhood affects the development of personality and interpersonal relationships. Particular attention is given to explaining the domination of women by men in traditional society. In view of the discussion it is recommended that the education of children should be equally distributed between fathers and mothers in the family and between men and women in the wider social community, that all organized social forces involved in youth education should systematically work to develop strategies and methods for moving beyond traditional parental roles, and that in all social contracts, self-management agreements, resolutions, and other documents, emphasis should be given to the measures needed to enable both parents to take equal care of their young children. (RH)

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PARENTAL ROLES CHANGE

I shall turn my attention to some theoretical and empirical points regarding the parental roles,which should lead to a synthesis of their practical implications in the broader social sphere.

Behaviour in a role includes a totality of separated actions,which all together gain a common meaning.Thus,a role is made of a sum of abstracted kinds of bihaviour;a sum which is obtained when we collect the possible and the expected interactions of the existing,singled-out behaviours.For example,the role of the "mother" includes numerous,different activities by a woman in interaction with a child.

There are theoretical (expected) roles or models which are common for the members of a certain group.They have to be learned in order to be realized in an interaction bertween the individuals of the group.

In fact,the theoretical models can not be separated from the specific behaviour in the action.A certain model exists if it is expressed in specific interactions of the individuals which are included in the group.When an individual practises certain behaviour in a role,it is at the same time in an interaction with a certain partner and also with the whole group to which the individual belongs.

There is sense in studying a separated role only if we take in to consideration its connections with the other roles. This means that the roles which exist in a certain society are

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interlinked in a fine network of roles.If we change only one thread,we change the whole network.Thus,if the employment of women changes the role of the mother,the role of the father is changed as well.This leads to a change in the whole system of social roles in a given society and,in this case,to a different division of duties regarding the bringing-up of children.

The changeability of roles is evident when they are considered from a historical aspect.An analysis of the maternal and the paternal roles shows that they do not appear as an identical sum of the same behaviour,if we consider their development through different epochs and in different societies (1,2).They depend on production trends.The changing of material living conditions changes the parental roles as well.But this - although necessary - is not enough.The changing of parental roles would be faster and more successful if we influence the creation of new models of parental behaviour systematically.

I shall point out the importance of the change of maternal and paternal roles from the complementary,traditional type of relations to a reciprocity of parental activities with regard to the upbringing of new generations.

First we should see how we can make a distinction between the theoretical role (the role that exists as an expected model of behaviour) and the role as a real kind of behaviour which is exhibited in the interaction among the individuals as well as on the interpersonal level as a part of the structure of the personality.

We can briefly say that we can not make strict boundaries between them,because the model itself can be a specific person

or some kinds of behaviour displayed by that person.On the other hand,the adoption of certain roles on an interpersonal level is realized through the "taking of roles from others" (3) or,more specifically,we can speak of the "sociogenesis" of the higher mental functions (4).

The other element which is important for the determination of the parental roles is their being developmental and varied,depending on the age of the subject.As far as adults are concerned,it is difficult to make a distinction between the role and the personality (because they have internalized roles or dispositions for roles as inseparable features of the personality).However,the behaviour in the role of children of preschool age,has not yet involved dispositions,because it is too early to speak of a personality or relatively permanent dispositions.The roles of childredn exist as real kinds of behaviour; we speak of practising roles that are outside the child in society itself.Later,the dispositions for the roles are created through internalization as well as the mental readiness which at a given moment leads to certain psychological experiences or forms of behaviour.

This means that future parents are created from the models of different parental roles which the children perceive in their experience or through the means of representation (movies, books,etc.).

Let us now turn to the kind of roles we offer children today.Perhaps this will be best seen in those children researched (ages 3 to 5) who underlined certain social factors through caricature,so that the reality we know sometimes appe-

ars laughable (5).

The mother is usually defined as a woman who has given birth to a child.However,children of 3 or 4,or those who come from the country,often point to activities of the mother which concern the maintenance of the household and the bringing up of children (cooking,cleaning,washing,caring for and loving the children)."A mother is the parent who does the washing" says one child.

The father is a "male" and a "man".City children whose mothers are unemployed add that "he works and brings in the money".The fathers of the children with both parents employed HELP the mother,but only if they have to,or if they are in the mood for it."When mother is ill,he makes lunch,and when she makes lunch,he has a rest" or "Father does the washing when mother is not here".

The employment of mothers leads to a new division of labour between the parents in the family.Children from Skopje (3 to 4 years old) say that the fathers bring them to the kindergardens,play with them,take them for walks and put them to bed, while their mothers wash,clean,iron and cook.We can be note that, even in the new distribution of duties,the mothers get the subordinate roles,although to some people the arrangement appears to be "modern" and can be found in contemporary children's literature.Still,it is a small step forward compared with the relations between the parents of the children who said that "their father dances at home" (an expression used for someone who does not do anything),or that "he does not do anything,he just sits in his chair" or "he drinks coffee and smokes cigarettes".

Unfortunately,the children's literature still presents mainly traditional and conservative maternal and paternal roles, which is not the case in reality,which is changing in a progressive direction (6). There are a great number of books in which the mother is glorified and the father almost wiped out.

In this sphere,not only are the children's books not following reality in practice,but also staying behind it.It should be the other way round if we were to pay more attention to the selection of content in children's literature.

It is interesting that 38% of the children researched in chlidren's homes list activities from the traditional division of labour between the parents and that the stereotypes are more emphasized in these cases (5). We can assume that they acquise the models of stereotyped sex roles mainly from books and movies. These children do not have the opportunity to correct their rigid stereotypes by watching the everyday models of interaction between parents which are much more flexible.

There are great variations in the way children determine the notions "parentship" and "family",depending on their own sosial reality.Yet,there are some common characteristics:their family and their parents are the ones that take care of them and satisfy their needs; they live with them together in the same home over long period of time;they feel that they need them and that the parents care both about them and the things they do.

This means that the maternal and paternal roles can change but that opportunities must be made during this period of living together for individuals in a community of different generations to establish among them relatively permanent,more individualized

and warm emotional ties and feelings of personal responsibility. This is the only way for the child to survive and grow,satisfying its primary need for love and security.

Let us now consider how the traditional type of motherhood and fatherhood reflects upon the development of the personality and interpersonal relations.

We assume that the development of the dominating social position of men in history took place because in the first division of labour based on the biological and physiological differences between sexes and generations,the women had to take care of the children and the home.They collected food at the beginning and later became the first farmers.Men hunted and protected the community from enemies.Later,men went to war against other tribes in order to conquer new lands and pastures and acquire new materials,but also to add to the labour force with slaves.

This division of labour between the sexes reflected upon the develpment of their psychological caracteristics and relations.The labour process and certain activities,such as hunting or defending the community, conditioned man to conquer: to kill or subordonate people in order to use them for their own purposes. This way led to the need for domination over the other members of the community,mostly over women and children as weaker than men.At the same time, the activities of women led to different needs in interpersonal relations:they had to make conditions for giving birth and allowing new life to thrive.

While men aspired to domination and sought to take up a dominant social position,women were occupied with the development and care of children.Men began to organize male groups,at

first for a more successful hunting and later for fighting and carrying on politics;women were left within the home and the family.This is briefly the historical process by which male domination gradually gained an institutionalized form.Namely,in different social institutions, the man has the leading and dominant roles,while the woman remains in the maternal role and with the activities concerning the home.

The gynocentrical explanation points to the appearance of mental features seeking domination during the individual development of boys.It is emphasized that children of both sexes identify in the beginning with the mother as the central person in their early development. However,when the boy becomes aware that belongs to the males,his identification with the mother stops.The young boy lacks male models when he tries to become a man,but at the same time he rejects identification with the female models. As a reaction against identification with the mother we encounter phenomena called protest or forced masculinity (8).The boy begins to give low value to the activities carried out mainly by women, and to emphasize the superiority of the male roles.

Thus,it is considered that dependence on women in early childhood and the lack of clear identification with his own sex make the boy search for his sex identity through domination over women.

It seems that the explanation of male domination lies in the traditional type of motherhood,whether we observe it from the point of view of psychological features which appear during the individual development of males or from that of its historical origin.Thus,one of the possibilities for interrupting the deve-

lopment of male domination lies in the realization of a different type of motherhood and fatherhhod. It is necessary that fathers and other men are involved in the bringing up of children so that boys would have good models for identification.Farthermore,these activities would contribute to the appearance of different needs in interpersonal relations and different mental features.

It should be added that different behaviour displayed in the maternal and paternal roles are not biologically predetermined (with the exception of insemination, pregnancy, giving birth and breast-feeding the child). The care and bringing up of children from the earliest age can be done equally well by mother and fathers,or any other adult.The important element here is not sex,but the readiness to answer the children's needs in a appropiate way. People who have a more direct experience during interaction with the child become more capable and more sensitive (1).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Having in mind the determination of the notion of roles, their development and creation,as well as our research which shows that the main division of the maternal and paternal roles is of a complementary and traditional type,we suggest that the following measures should be taken:

1.THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN SHOULD BE EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER IN THE FAMILY AND BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN THE WIDER SOCIAL COMMUNITY.

We should immediately employ an equal number of men and women in the kindergartens.This is because within the family we have an emphatic,rigid division of maternal and paternal roles of the

complementary type.Moreover,the roles that are learned in the family are more difficult to change,since thay include strong emotional components. The child builds the first parental models into itself and establishes them through identification with the other models of the same sex.

We can start with a planned development of modern parenthood in the pre-school organizations of associated labour, as a part of the social care for the children and an integral part of the family,reflecting the family as a wider unit.

2.ALL ORGANIZED SOCIAL FORCES INVOLVED IN YOUTH EDUCATION SHOULD SYSTEMATICALLY WORK ON DEVELOPING STRATEGIES AND METHODS FOR CHANGING THE TRADITIONAL PARENTAL ROLES.For example:

-let us change the models of parental roles we present in the books and movies made for children;

-let us analyse with the children the conservative models of parental roles which we meet in real life and try to change them,for example,through drama and role-play;

-let us show with our own example that we are real parents. This is not meant only for our own children in the family but for other children as well.

3.IN ALL SOCIAL CONTRACTS,SELFMANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS,RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS,LET US EMPHASIZE THE NECESSARY MEASURES FOR THE REALIZATION OF PARENTAL CARE OF CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY AND IN SOCIETY.For example:

-let us commit ourselves to employing an equal number of male and female tutors;

-let fathers and mothers take equal care of the young children and share maternity leave.

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S U M M A R Y

On the basis of empirical researche and analysis of parental roles within cultural and historical theory,some practical implications are given for the change of mather and father roles from the complementary and traditional type.

Here are some of the possibilities for the realization of more modern parental roles:

-equally divided children´s upbringing between mother and fother in the family,and between husband and wife in the broader social community.Employment of equal numbers of men and women in nurseries;

-all organized social forces that are inwolved in children´s upbringing should work systematically to find strategies and methods for changing traditional parental roles.This could be realized,for example,through the change of parental models showen in children´s books and films;

-in all social agreements,resolutions and other social documents the measures for the realization of parental care in the family and community should be underlined (e.g. maternity leave to be devided between the spouses by law).